

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-12 PRS-01

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P R 301145Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4737

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 0526

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GB, EK

SUBJ: MACIAS VISIT TO GABON

1. DURING CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER RAWIRE JUNE 29,
I HAD OCCASION TO DISCUSS MACIAS VISIT TO GABON AND
GENERAL STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES.

2. RAWIRI SAID THAT SUBJECT OF BORDER DISPUTE
WAS NOT RPT NOT DISCUSSED BWTWEEN TWO CHIEFS OF STATE.
MATTER HE SAID WITH A SMILE WAS NOW EFFECTIVELY
"BURIED". I ASKED IF THIS MEANT THAT GABON INTENDED
TO REMAIN ON M'BAGNE AND RAWIRE STATED MOST
EMPHATICALLY THAT THIS WAS THE CASE. I THEN ASKED
IF ANY AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED CONCERNING
TERRITORIAL WATERS AND ANY POTENTIAL OFF-SHORE OIL
IN AREA. RAWIRI REPLIED THAT THIS POSED NO PROBLEM.
IF ANY COMPANY INTERESTED IN EXPLORING FOR OIL, ALL
IT NEEDED TO DO WAS NOTIFY GABONESE WHO WOULD IN
TURN CONTACT GUINEANS (PRESUMABLY PROCEDURE COULD
BE REVERSED ALTHOUGH RAWIRI DID NOT SO INDICATE).
OIL COMPANY WOULD THEN BE INFORMED IF LOCATION WAS
AGREED BY BOTH COUNTRIES TO BE EITHER IN GABONESE
OR EQUATORIAL GUINEAN WATERS. IF LOCATION IN AREA
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WHERE AGREEMENT NOT REACHED BY THE TWO COUNTRIES

OIL COMPANY WOULD BE INFORMED OF AGREED-UPON
PERCENTAGE EACH COUNTRY WOULD CLAIM FOLLOWING
DIRECT GABONESE-GUINEAN NEGOTIATIONS.

3. RAWIRI DESCRIBED THE DOMESTIC SITUATION IN
EQUATORIAL GUINEA AS DISASTROUS AND SAID THAT MACIAS
AWARE OF GRAVITY OF SITUATION AND BEGINNING TO REALIZE
HE HAD BEEN LED ASTRAY BY HIS GUINEAN ADVISORS FROM
CONAKRY AND OTHER MARXIST-LEANING COUNSELORS.
ACCORDING TO RAWIRI, GUINEANS FROM CONAKRY WERE
BEING SEND BACK HOME AND MACIAS INTENDS TO MOVE
TOWARD MORE NON-ALIGNED MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD POLICIES.
AMONG OTHER THINGS, RAWIRI COMMENTED THAT THIS WOULD
CERTAINLY FACILITATE EQUATORIAL GUINEA'S RELATIONS
WITH ITS NEIGHBORS.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE PRESS AND RADIO STATEMENTS
TO THE CONTRARY, POPULAR WELCOME MACIAS RECEIVED
IN GABON WAS LUKEWARM AT BEST. RELATIONS AT THE
OFFICIAL LEVEL, HOWEVER, APPEARED TO BE CORDIAL.
MACIAS WAS TAKEN ON EXTENSIVE TOUR AROUND LIBREVILLE
AND VISITED ALSO PORT GENTIL AND FRANCEVILLE.
RAWIRI SAID THAT MACIAS EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT
"OPENNESS" OF GABONESE SOCIETY AND LACK OF
SECURITY CONTROLS. WHILE SUCH DESCRIPTION FAIRLY
ACCURATE REFLECTION OF PICTURE CONVEYED BY
GABON, EMBASSY AWARE OF FACT THAT CAREFUL PRECAUTIONS
WERE TAKEN TO PROTECT MACIAS FROM EQUATORIAL GUINEAN
REFUGEES IN GABON WHO WERE EITHER DETAINED OR INDIVIDUALLY
INSTRUCTED BY POLICE TO REMAIN HOME DURING VISIT.
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